

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1-14 (Canceled)

15 15. (New) A self-orienting caster for pieces of furniture and the like, comprising a pair of wheels, which are supported so that they can rotate about a horizontal axis by a supporting body, which has a cylindrical recess that has a vertical axis and is open upward and axially offset with respect to said horizontal axis, and in which a pivot for the caster is inserted rotatably, said pivot being insertable in a receptacle of the piece of furniture in which the caster is to be fitted, further comprising a through seat formed in said body, a tubular element that is driven through said seat coaxially to said horizontal axis and has two cylindrical tubular portions that lie on opposite sides of said body in order to rotatably support said wheels, means being provided for the axial and rotational locking of said tubular element in said seat and means being provided for retaining said wheels on said tubular
15 portions.

20 16. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein said means for retaining said wheels are constituted by annular slots, which are formed at the free ends of said tubular portions and form respective annular lips, and by collars, which are formed in said wheels and engage in said slots so that they are retained by said collars and retain said wheels on said tubular portions.

25 17. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein said means for locking said tubular element in said seat comprise two annular ridges, which surround said tubular element and form a channel between them, and an annular protrusion, which is formed in said seat and can be engaged by forcing in said channel, said annular protrusion having two flat surfaces, which are associated with respective flat surfaces of said tubular element in order to prevent the rotation of said tubular element in said seat.

30 18. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein annular ridges protrude from opposite sides of said supporting body and surround coaxially said tubular portions, and said wheels, on the side directed toward said body, are

provided with annular grooves that are suitable to receive said ridges.

19. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein said tubular portions form respective rolling tracks for rolling elements of bearings in order to rotatably support said wheels.

5 20. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein said seat is ovalized in the direction of said vertical axis, said flat surfaces are orientated in the direction of ovalization of said seat, and elastic means are interposed between said tubular element and said body and act so as to raise said body with respect to said tubular element.

10 21. (New) The caster of claim 20, comprising a device for self-braking said wheels, which consists of elastic means, which are interposed between said tubular element and said body and are sized so as to keep said body raised with respect to said tubular element in a position for braking the wheels, at which said ridges are in friction contact with the walls of said
15 grooves when the caster is not loaded, and keep said body lowered with respect to said tubular element in a position in which the wheels are released and at which said ridges are free to slide in said grooves when the caster is loaded.

22. (New) The caster of claim 21, wherein said elastic means are
20 constituted by a spring, which is accommodated in a seat of said body that is open toward said seat and lies above said tubular element and acts thereon.

23. (New) The caster of claim 22, wherein a hole is formed in said body, in a diametrically opposite position with respect to said seat of the spring, and is suitable to receive a screw that acts on said tubular element in
25 order to lift it into the position for releasing said wheels.

24. (New) The caster of claim 19, wherein said supporting bearings are constituted by an annular cage, which is provided with a plurality of receptacles for said rolling elements formed by axial partitions, means being provided for retaining said rolling elements in said receptacles.

30 25. (New) The caster of claim 24, wherein said retention means are constituted by teeth, which protrude from said partitions into said

receptacles.

26. (New) The caster of claim 24, wherein said retention means are constituted by a ring, which is associated with said cage by means of an annular flange that protrudes from one of its faces and engages in slits
5 formed in the ends of said partitions.

27. (New) The caster of claim 15, wherein said pivot can rotate in a bush that is inserted in said recess and is retained axially by an annular lip, which is formed on the rim of said recess and is folded onto said bush.

28. (New) The caster of claim 15, comprising an element for covering
10 said body that is shaped so as to mate with its contour, said element being locked on said body by an annular lip formed on the rim of said recess.